

Ferdie J. Deering

JAN 21 1982

It's Time to Start Beautifying for 1989

IF OKLAHOMA is to look clean and green for the contemplated World's Fair in 1989, we need to start now.

It's a good idea to make Oklahoma cleaner and greener this year for our 75th Statehood Anniversary celebration, says Jim Neal, executive director of Oklahoma City Beautiful Inc. His organization is gearing up to help accomplish that, with cooperation from other local and state organizations.

It wouldn't cost much, if anything, to make Oklahoma a great deal cleaner. About all we need to do is for people to break their careless habits of littering the streets. It isn't necessary to describe the results or to point out specific litterers. Just look around and you will see plenty of both — probably near where you live or work.

Cold days in January might not seem like a good time to discuss such warm weather subjects as planting trees, trimming hedges and mowing lawns. The truth is that now is a good time to plant trees and any month is a good time to

beautify your home.

"Unless things change there may not be an elm tree left in Oklahoma City by 1989," Neal says. Dutch elm disease that is spread by elm beetles is the cause and it is difficult to prevent or control.

Systemic chemicals may destroy hatching insects if injected very early in spring. Treatments cost upwards of \$30 per tree but it may cost several hundred dollars to remove a large dead tree, and the value of the tree is lost to the property owner besides.

To counteract this spreading loss, Oklahoma City Beautiful Inc. is working with local schools on a 7-year program to encourage planting of hardier, adapted tree varieties and to discourage littering. The program has historical and other aspects also.

"We are starting with the youngsters because they are willing to learn and to act," Neal said. They will need cooperation at home, because children seldom can overcome severe parental apathy.

Not everybody knows how to plant

a tree. In this dry country, successful tree culture involves somewhat more than digging a little hole and sticking a sapling in the ground. The Forestry Division of the State Department of Agriculture has prepared information sheets that will be made available to tell how it is done.

Trees often die simply because no provision has been made to retain rainfall and irrigation water around them long enough for the water to soak into the ground. Runoff is too fast on hard ground.

Trees enhance property values, save energy and dress up a community. Most of the trees we see along city streets and many in the country were planted by someone. We enjoy them. Now it is our turn to plant more trees to beautify our city and state.

When we undertake to make our city cleaner and greener, we likely will find that our pride in the place where we live grows right along with our neat homes, clean yards and green trees. The results pay rich dividends in satisfactory living.